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The Workshop

A Monthly Journal, devoted to Progress of the Useful Arts

EDITED BY

PROF. W. BAUMER, I. SCHNORR AND OTHERS.

VOL. III.

NO. 7.

ON FOUNTAINS, AND THEIR ARTISTIC TREATMENT.

By VALENTINE TEIRICH.

(With illustrations from the author's original designs.)

Fountains were in olden times frequent and ever-welcome subjects in ornamental art, which turned them to good account for the creation of many æsthetic and thoroughly well executed works. Even the common wells were often adorned with profuse elegance, and the ornamental fountains displayed an independent artistic style which was frequently a special help to the general decoration.

Not only were masterly executed fountains placed in the public squares and gardens of towns, but they formed also a part of the decoration of the interiors of private houses, and even in Pompeii no atrium was without its piscina and its basin for family use. Ritual purposes led afterwards to the construction of Reservoirs, Nymphs, Baptisteries, Christening-bowls and holy-water-vessels for Churches, which may perhaps be reckoned as belonging to this category.

Every period of time and style seems to have contributed an inexhaustible fund of creative power to the decoration of fountains, some more or less rich, elegant and appropriate in appearance than others, so that it may be interesting to take a survey of their manifold types.

At the first glance we cannot fail to perceive that they divide themselves into two great and distinct groups, naturally demanding an entirely different artistic treatment; namely those which are placed against the wall, and those which stand out by themselves in open spaces.

Rome, the eternal city, notwithstanding the destruction of so many of these works, still displays the most beautiful specimens of both these types, which give such

a lively and refreshing effect to the whole vicinity by the abundance of their sparkling crystalline waters. No visitor can ever forget the world-renowned façade of the Fontana Trevi and the Aqua Paola, with their imposing waterfalls, rushing from rock to rock into their majestic basins. Neither the defect of architectural or sculptural decoration, both belonging to more modern times, can weaken the magnificent effect of a composition so grand in conception. The central point of the Fontana Trevi, the niche containing the statue of Neptune surrounded with pillars, is in perfect harmony with the rich palatial façade of which it forms a part; but a still more splendid effect is produced by the Aqua Paola, through its quiet simplicity, and the foaming abundance of its cascades. The streets of Rome contain a great number of other wall fountains, of which we will only mention, by way of example, that at the corner of the street Borgo Nuovo, leading to the Vatican (fig. 1), the basin of which stands in a newly restored niche, beneath which figures of dolphins spout forth streams of water crossing one another in all directions.

Among modern cities Paris was the first to follow the example of Rome in the establishment of public fountains, and though many a harsh judgment has been pronounced with regard to the style of their execution, it must be acknowledged that in none have the great and just principles of art been entirely disregarded. In proof of this we may cite Davioud's new fountain, which forms an excellent finish to the Boulevard St. Michel, and can hardly be surpassed as the decoration of a street



Fig. 1.

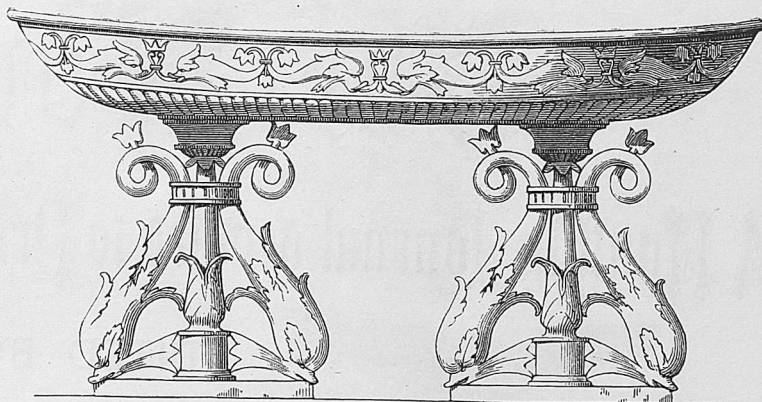


Fig. 2.

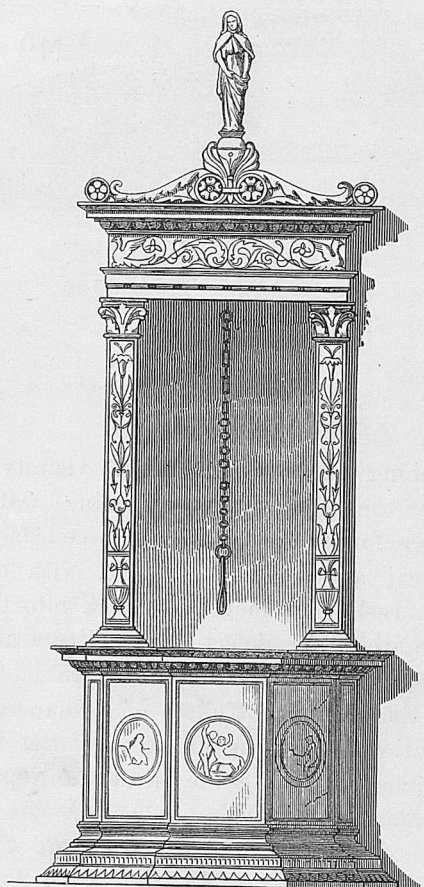


Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.

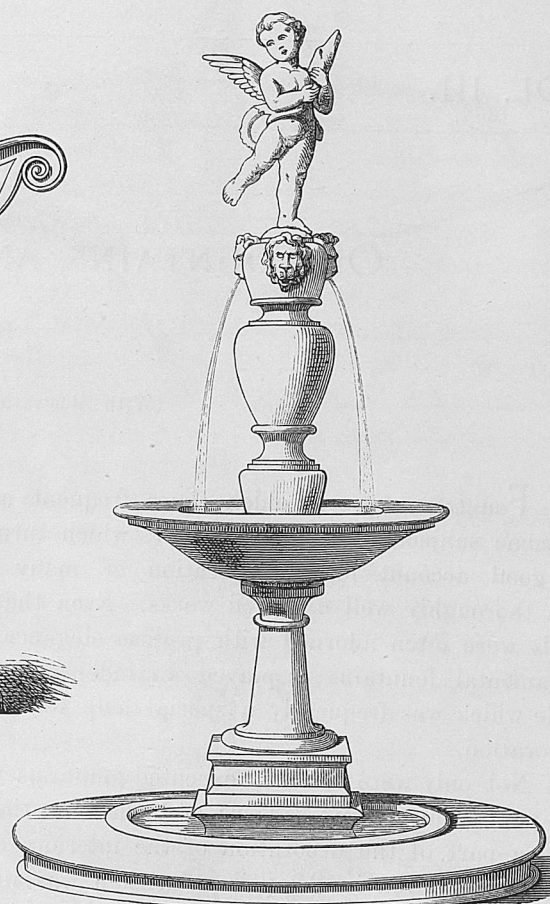


Fig. 8.

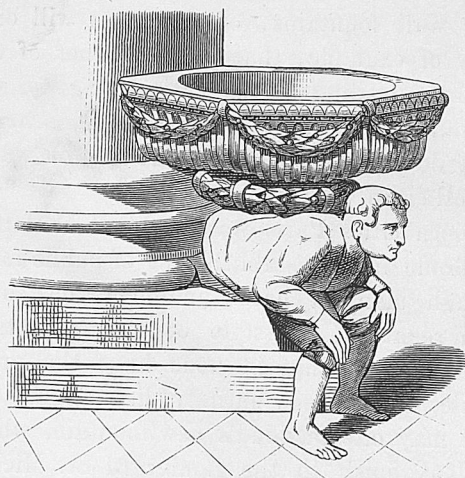


Fig. 6.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 7.

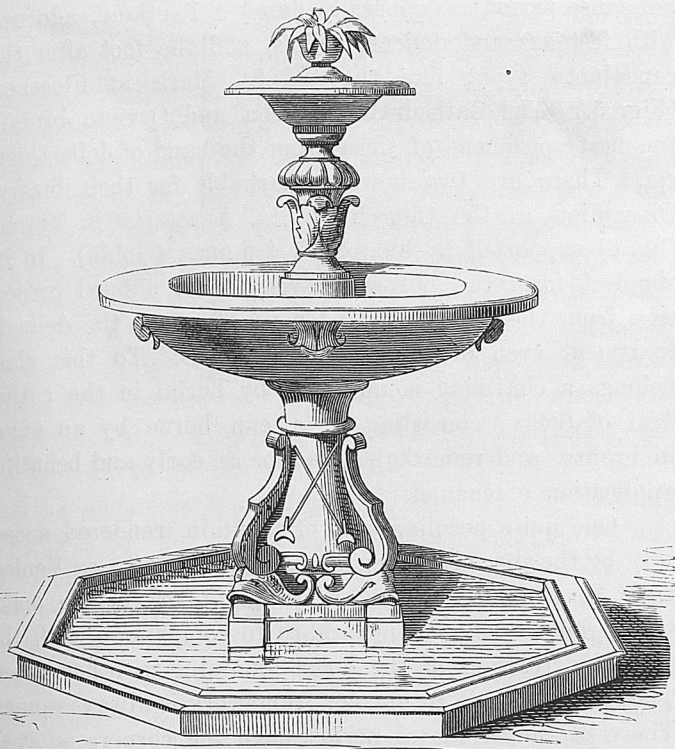


Fig. 9.

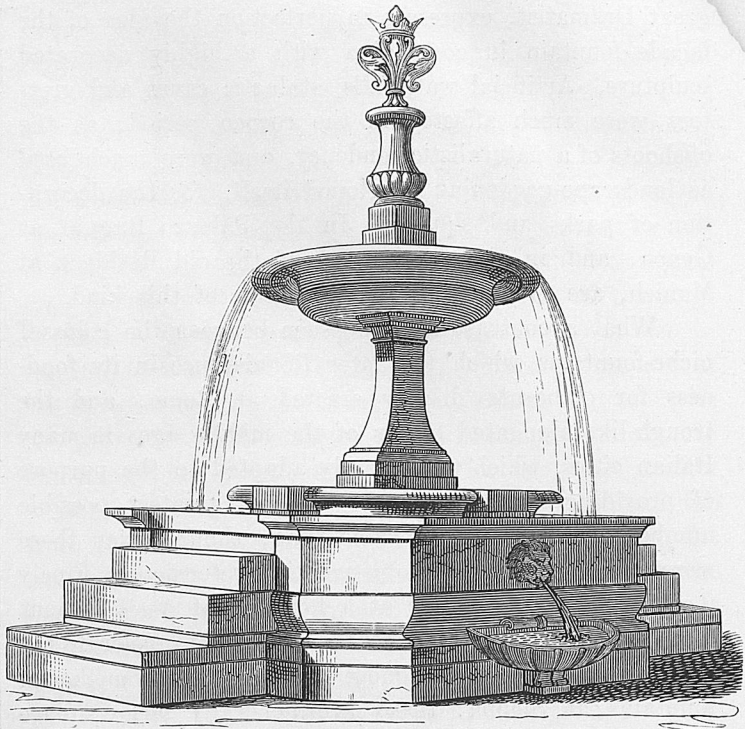


Fig. 10.

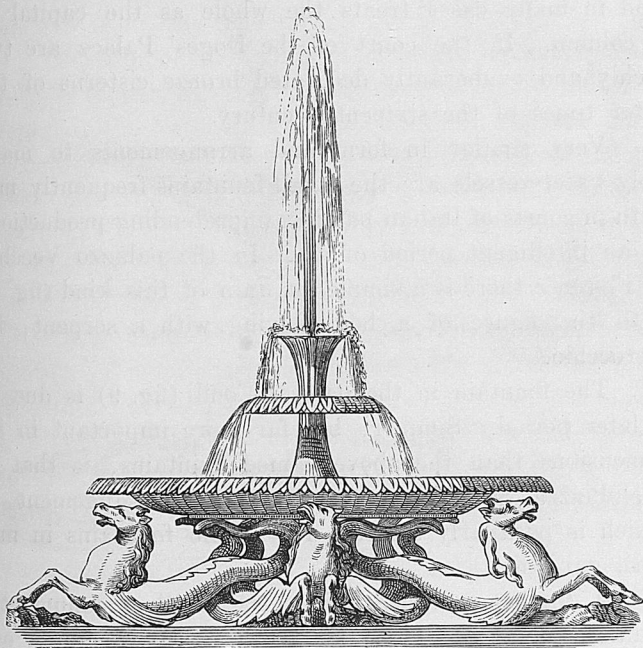


Fig. 13.

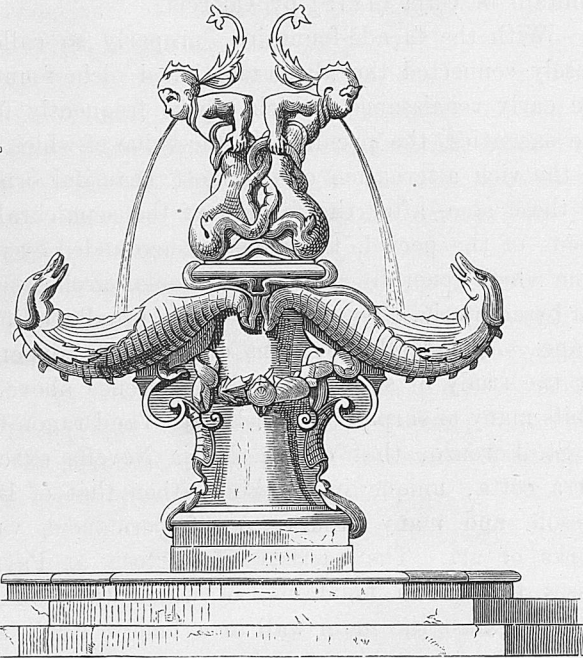


Fig. 11.

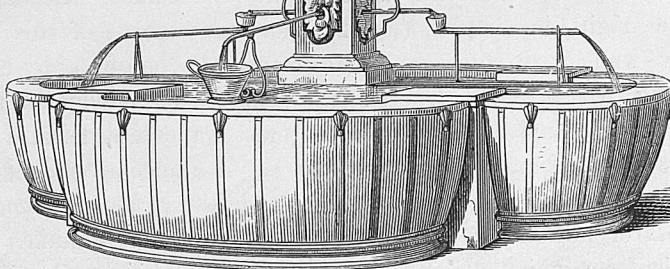


Fig. 12.

corner. The Molière fountain, designed by Visconti (1840—1850) which supports the monument of the great Dramatist, expresses in perfection the idea of the façade-fountain in connection with a highly decorated sculpture. Artificial waterfalls, stalactic caves and grottoes were much affected in the rococo period, as the offshoots of a naturalistic tendency, and were much used as landscape-gardening developed itself, for the decoration of parks and squares. In the Palazzo Raggio at Genoa, and in the court yard of the old Residenz at Munich, are to be found two fountains of this kind.

What a contrast is to be seen between the colossal niche-fountains which the later Renaissance in its fondness for elaborate display erected at Rome, and the trough-like elongated basins of the middle ages in many Italian cities, which were merely adapted to the purpose of providing watering-places for the greatest possible number of people at the same time, though even these were not altogether without artistic pretensions. Finely modelled lions' heads, as at a fountain at Assisi, spout forth the water, and ornamental escutcheons decorate the trough. Still richer and more peculiar are the mediæval fountains at Sienna: these are generally large square basins shewing a variety of sculpture on the three open sides, the type of which may be seen in the beautiful fountain of Gaja (1419) by Quercia.

With the façade-fountains, properly so called, are closely connected the above-mentioned niche-fountains of the early renaissance, which are so frequently found in the sacristies, the peculiar artistic value of which consists in the rich alternation of the most beautiful ornaments. In these also, after the fashion of the sepulchral monuments of the period, the niche is surrounded by pilasters from which generally spring semicircular arches surmounted by acroteria. The basin itself is usually elliptical in shape. Almost all the towns of Italy offer opportunities for the study of such works, but Florence above all exhibits many of surpassing excellence. The Dragon-fountain of St. Lorenzo, that of Sta. Maria Novella executed in terra cotta, unique in its kind, then that of Badia di Fiesole and many others are of permanent value as works of art. The sacristy of Certosa at Pavia possesses three such fountains, of which the centre one, placed against the main wall in a lunette richly adorned with figures in marble, contains a reservoir in the shape of a sarcophagus, into which the water flows through excellently modelled masks of bronze; the second, which projects from the wall on the right is simpler (fig. 2) and opposite to it a draw-well with an octagonal basin, of charming design (fig. 3), but which, strictly speaking, does not belong to the same category. Not unfrequently the bowl of these niche-fountains takes the form of a ship, as is seen especially in many holy-water-vessels in Churches, and the later periods of the renaissance have long retained this form which originated at an earlier time. As an example of this kind we may cite the simple holy-water-bowl in Sta. Croce in Florence (fig. 4), in which the lenticular plan extends even to the base, which is more generally circular in section.

For the rest, these holy-water-vessels of the early renaissance period are generally fluted à l'antique, adorned with festoons and delicate reliefs, and the foot after the candelabra type, like that of St. Mark at Florence (Fig. 5.) The Cathedrals of Siena and Orvieto contain the best specimens of these from the hand of della Quercia. There are two bowls remarkable for their bizarre conception in the Church of Sta. Anastasia in Verona (fig. 6) supported by humpbacked figures (Gobbi). In its simplest form the holy-water-vessel was a bowl projecting from the wall, relying for its effect on the delicate treatment even of the minutest details. To this class belongs a charming composition by Turini in the cathedral of Siena, consisting of a cup borne by an angel in bronze, and remarkable also for an early and beautiful application of enamel.

One quite peculiar kind of fountain, rendered necessary by the special circumstances of such a city as Venice, is to be seen in the cisterns of that place, which make indeed but a modest appearance in comparison with the splendid creations of the large fountains in other cities. Though circular in form their framework is always square. Those of the mediæval period have the corners adorned with lions' heads and other ornaments of a similar nature (fig. 7), while the renaissance goes far beyond this, and in many cases treats the whole as the capital of a column. In the court of the Doges' Palace are two richly and exuberantly decorated bronze cisterns of the later times of the sixteenth century.

Very similar in form and arrangements to many holy-water-vessels are the small fountains frequently met with in courts of Italian palaces, unpretending productions of an intelligent period of art. In the palazzo Vecchio at Florence there is a simple fountain of this kind (fig. 8) with the figure of a boy playing with a serpent, by Verocchio.

The fountain in the palazzo Condi (fig. 9) is due to a later period. Simpler, but far more important in its dimensions than the above named fountains, is that of the Piazza Sta. Croce (fig. 10), the arrangement of which is peculiarly suitable for public fountains in modern gardens.

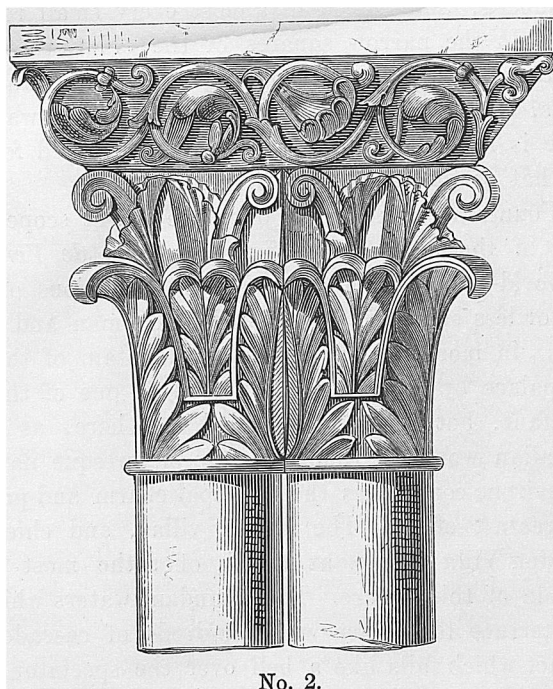
A further advance brings us to the monumental fountains of Italy, France and Germany, which stand out entirely free on all sides, and are the ornaments of the public squares and parks, the most perfect creations of the renaissance. Although we are indebted to the Gothic for many works of this kind of especial beauty, still this style has too often, by excessive attention to architectonic composition, neglected the execution of the bowl as the most important feature of the whole.

A glance at one of the most celebrated works of this kind, the *Schöne-Brunnen* at Nuremberg, will be enough to justify our opinion, the gothic tower being here the principal object. Of far superior conception is the *Alle-Brunnen* of Brunswick, in which three bowls are disposed one over the other.

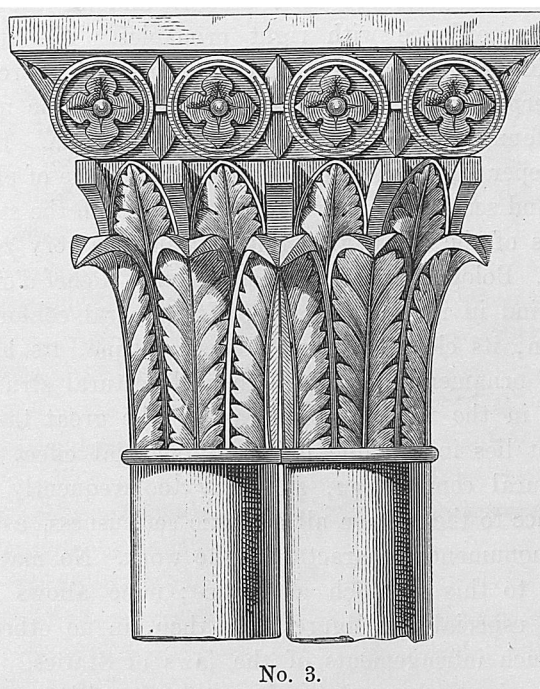
The wrought-iron draw-wells of mediæval times are very frequently treated as to their several parts in a



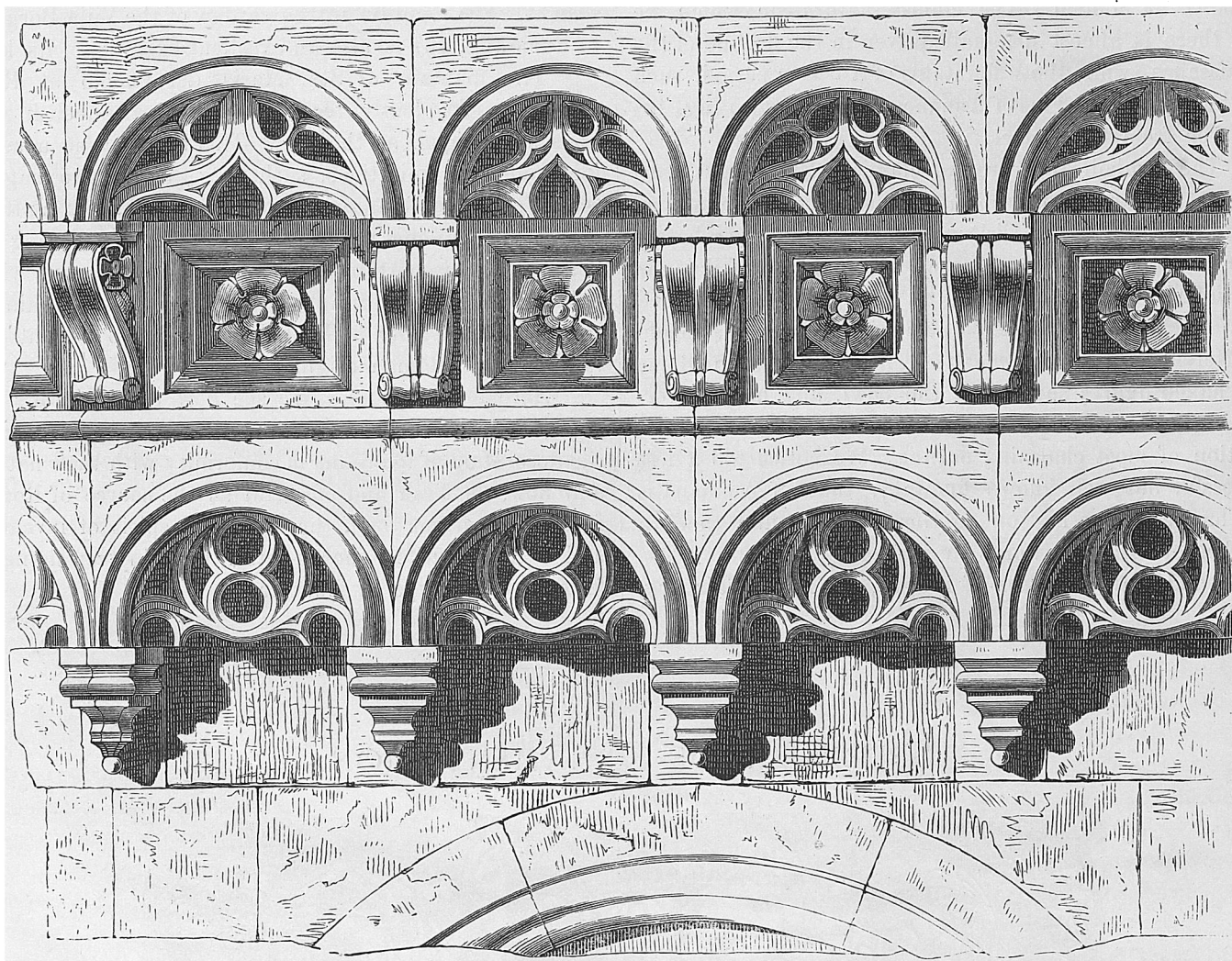
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No. 2.



No. 3.



No. 4.

Nos. 2 and 3. From Segovia. Romanesque Capitals from Door of St. Martin's Church.

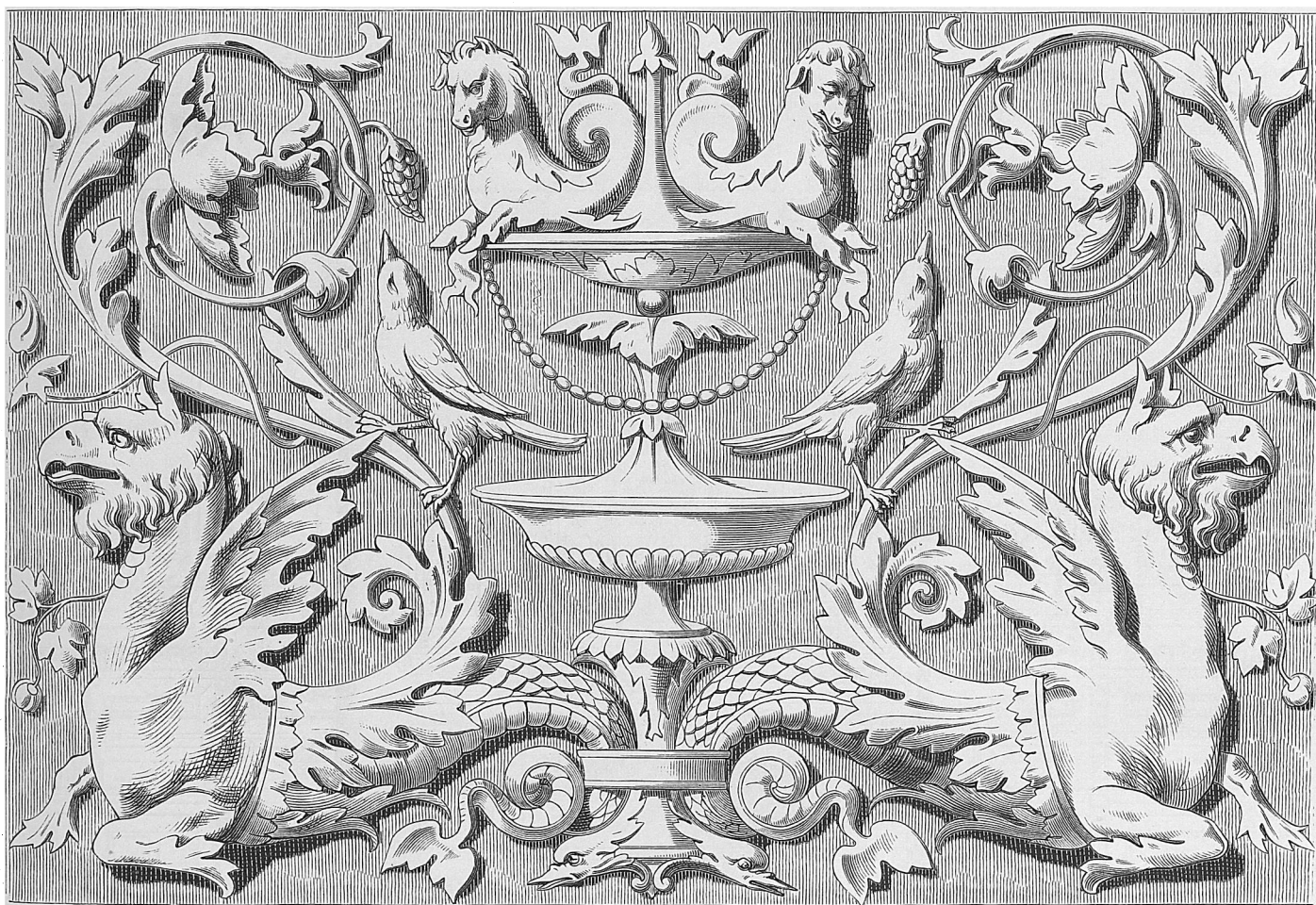
No. 4. From Palermo. Corbel-Table crowning the wall behind the High Altar of St. Maria della Catena Church.



No. 5.



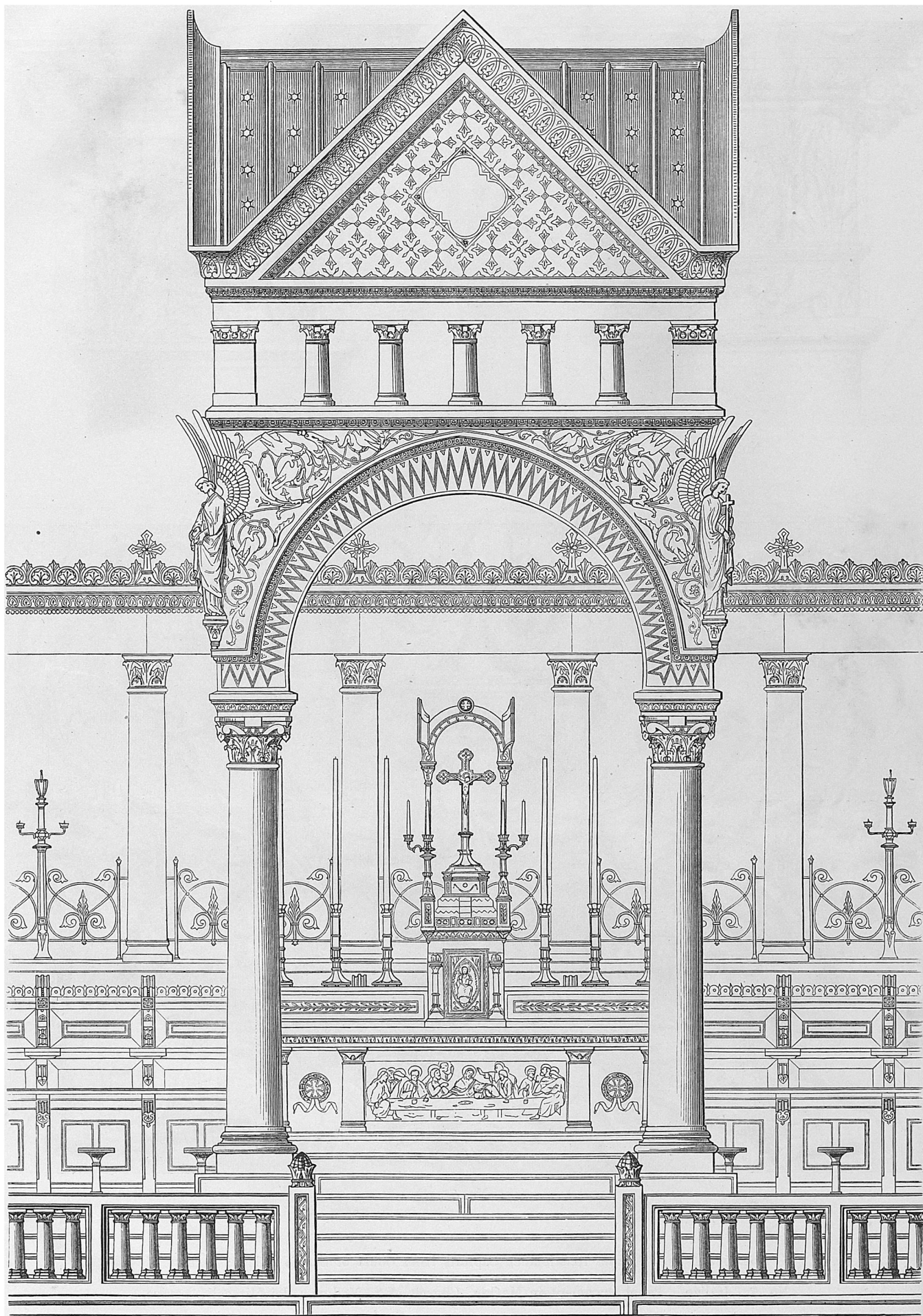
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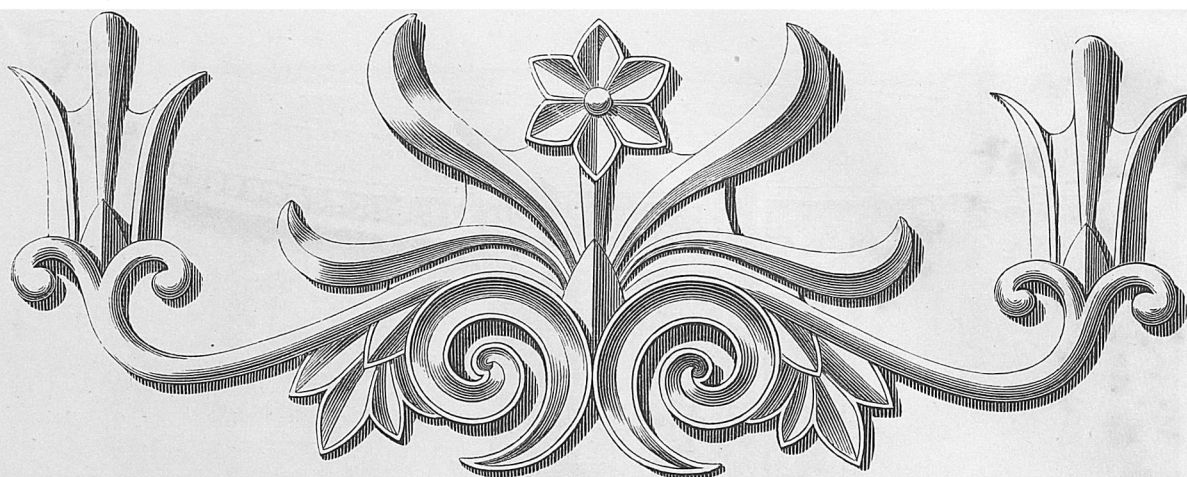
No. 7.

Nos. 5 and 6. Italian. Renaissance Capitals from Court of Scrofa Palace, Ferrara.

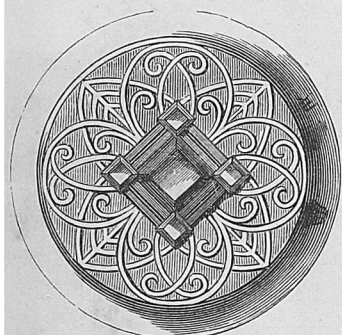
No. 7. Italian. Panel Ornament in Marble, Church of S. Madonna dei Miracoli, Venice.



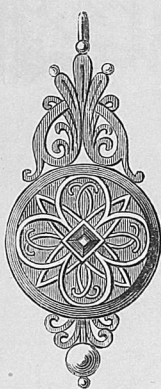
No. 8. Ciborium in the new Church St. Pierre de Montrouge, Paris. M. Vaudremer, Archt.
For Plan see No. 9 of Supplement.



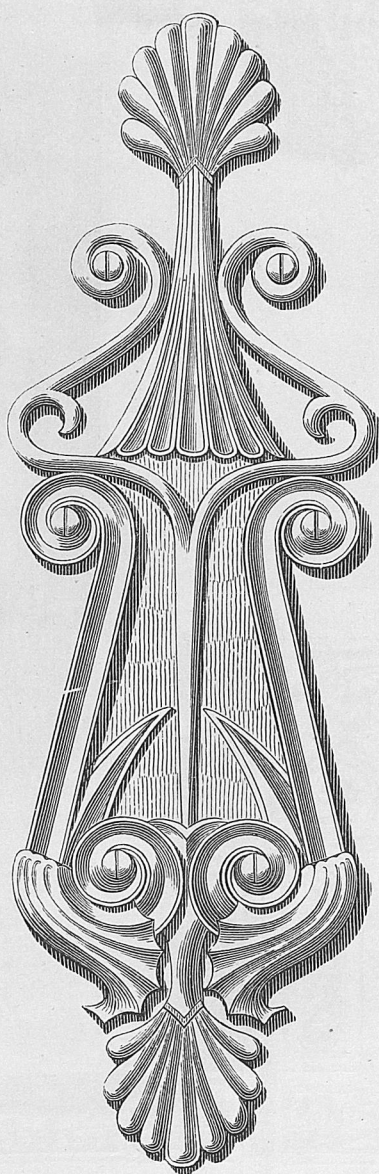
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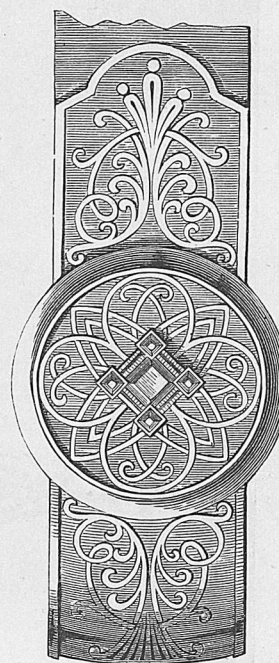
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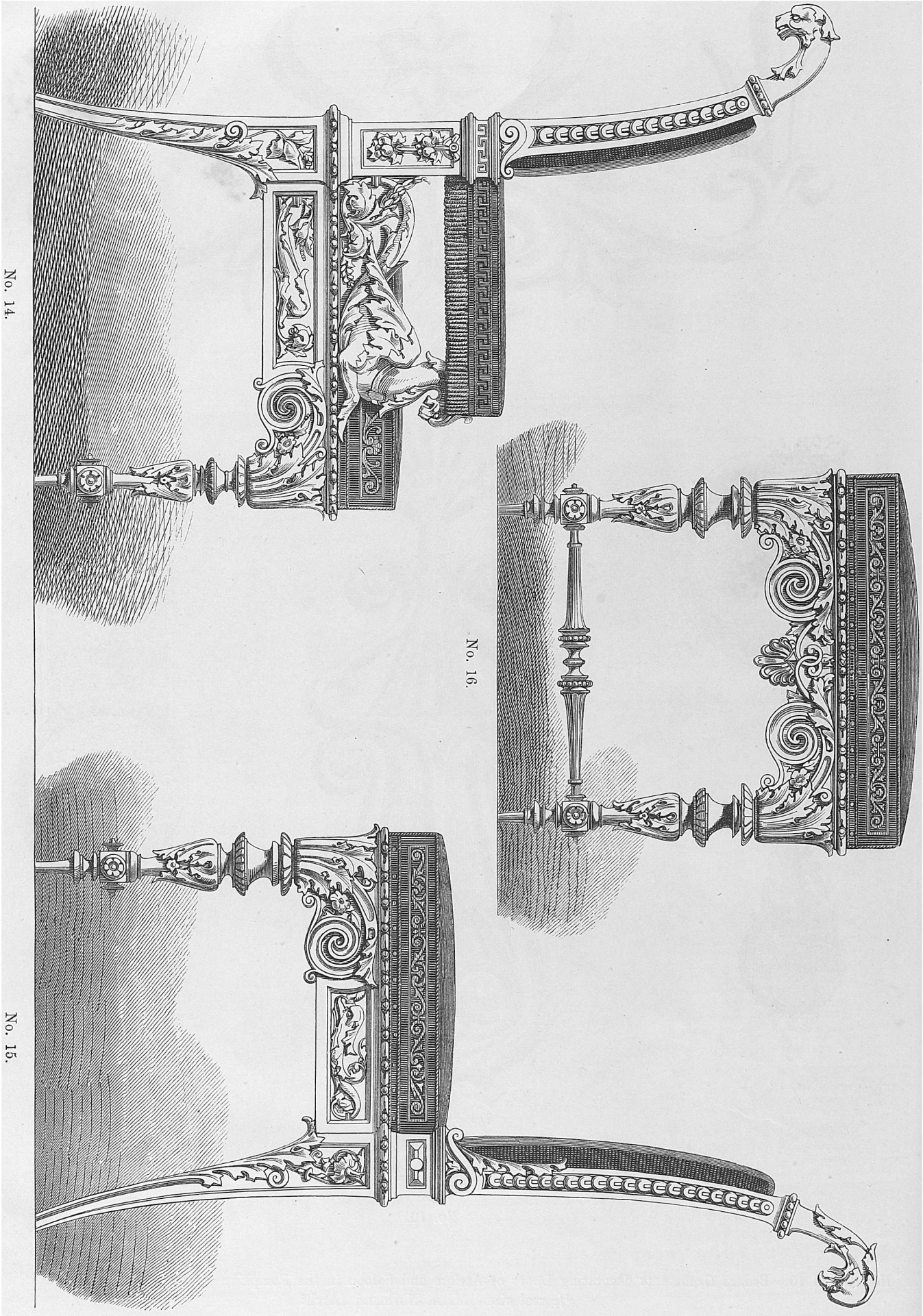
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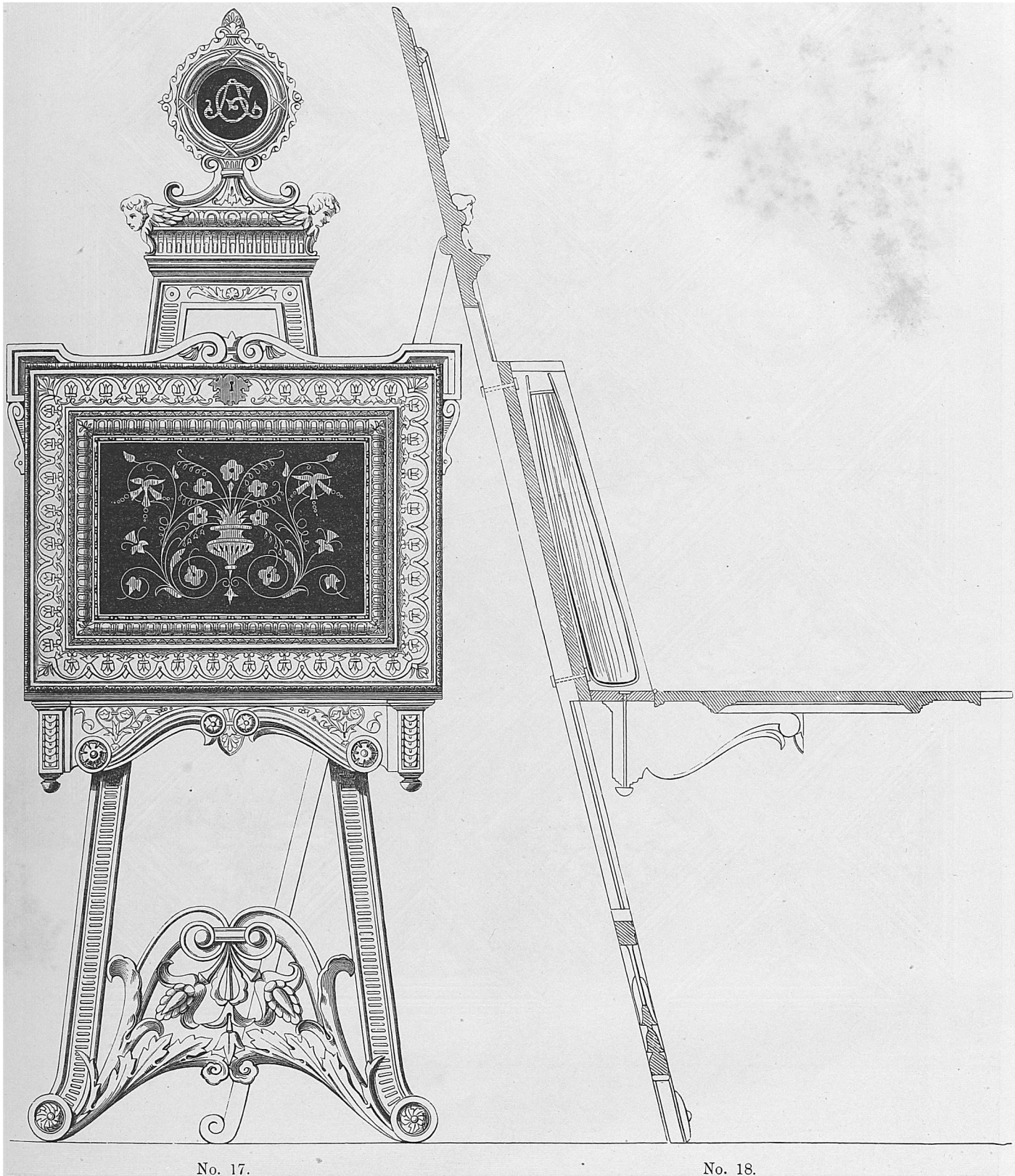
No. 13.

Nos. 9 and 10. Bronze Ornaments decorating Doors of Atrium and Saloon in the Pompeian House of Prince Napoleon, Paris.
 $\frac{1}{2}$ real size. M. A. Normand, Archt.

Nos. 11—13. Modern Jewellery.



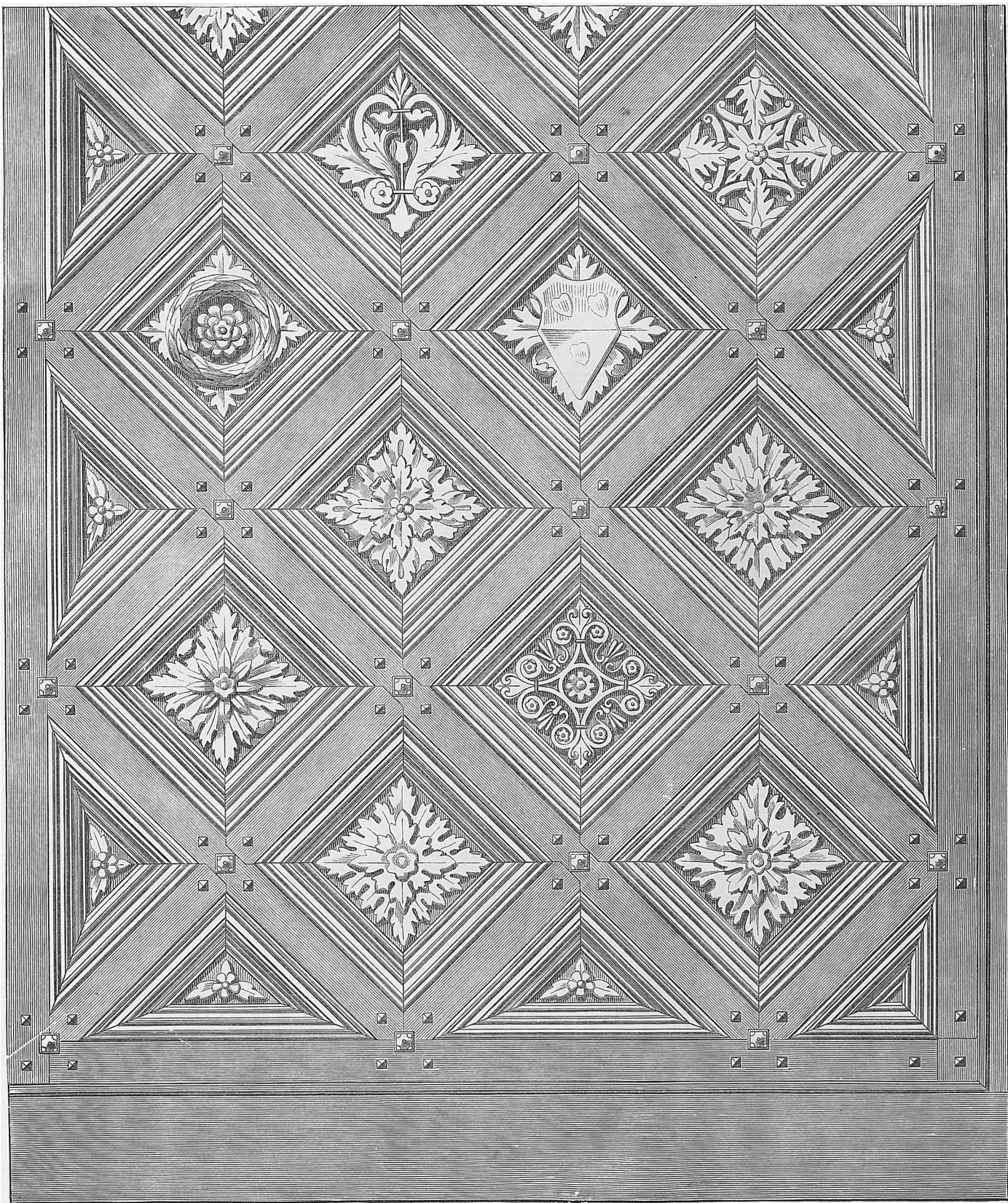
Nos. 14—16. Drawing-Room Furniture; Rich Arm-Chair, Chair and Tabouret designed by Mr. F. Rheinhardt, Archt., Stuttgart. Full-size details Nos. 1—3 of Supplement. (See last Part of the “*Workshop*”.)



No. 17.

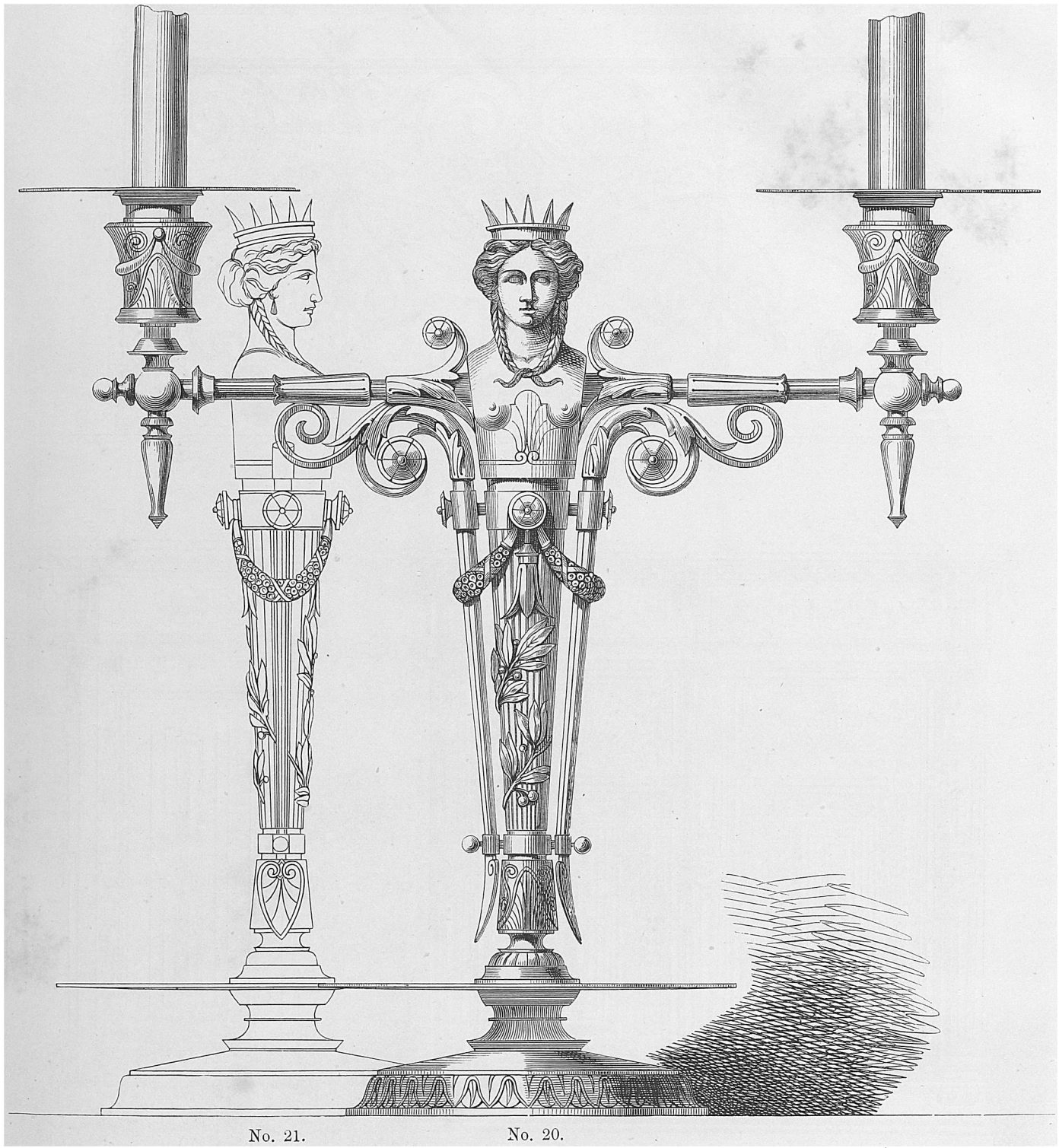
No. 18.

Nos. 17 and 18. Portfolio Stand in American Walnut. Mr. R. A. Gnauth, Archt., Stuttgart.
 Dead polish; central panel stained black with colored scroll work, picked out in gold.
 Full-size details, Supplement No. 8.



No. 19.

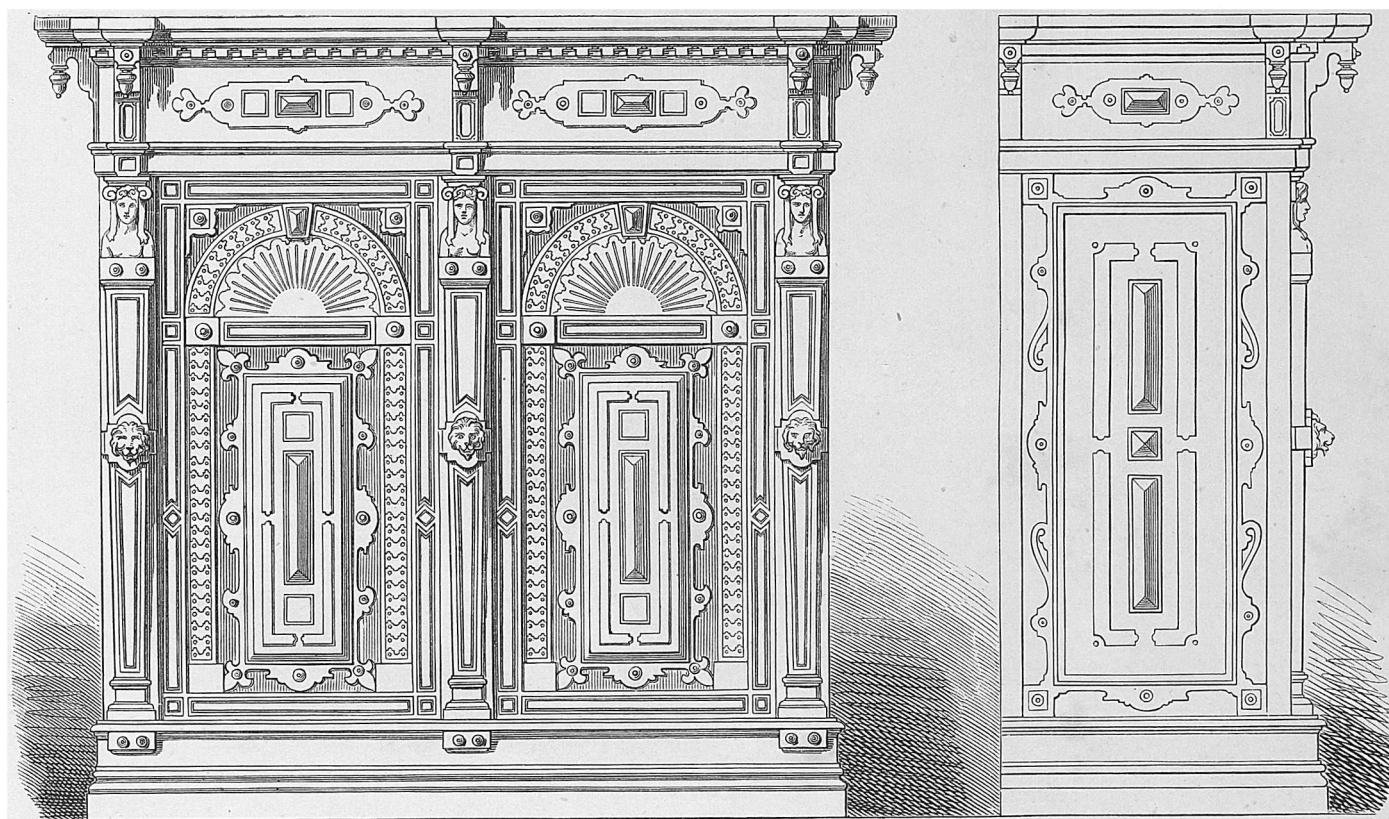
No. 19. Portion of Door of Cappella Colleoni, in Bergamo. $\frac{1}{6}$ real size.



No. 20 and 21. Bronze Candelabrum. $\frac{3}{5}$ full size, designed by Mr R. F. Rentsch, Dresden.



No. 22.

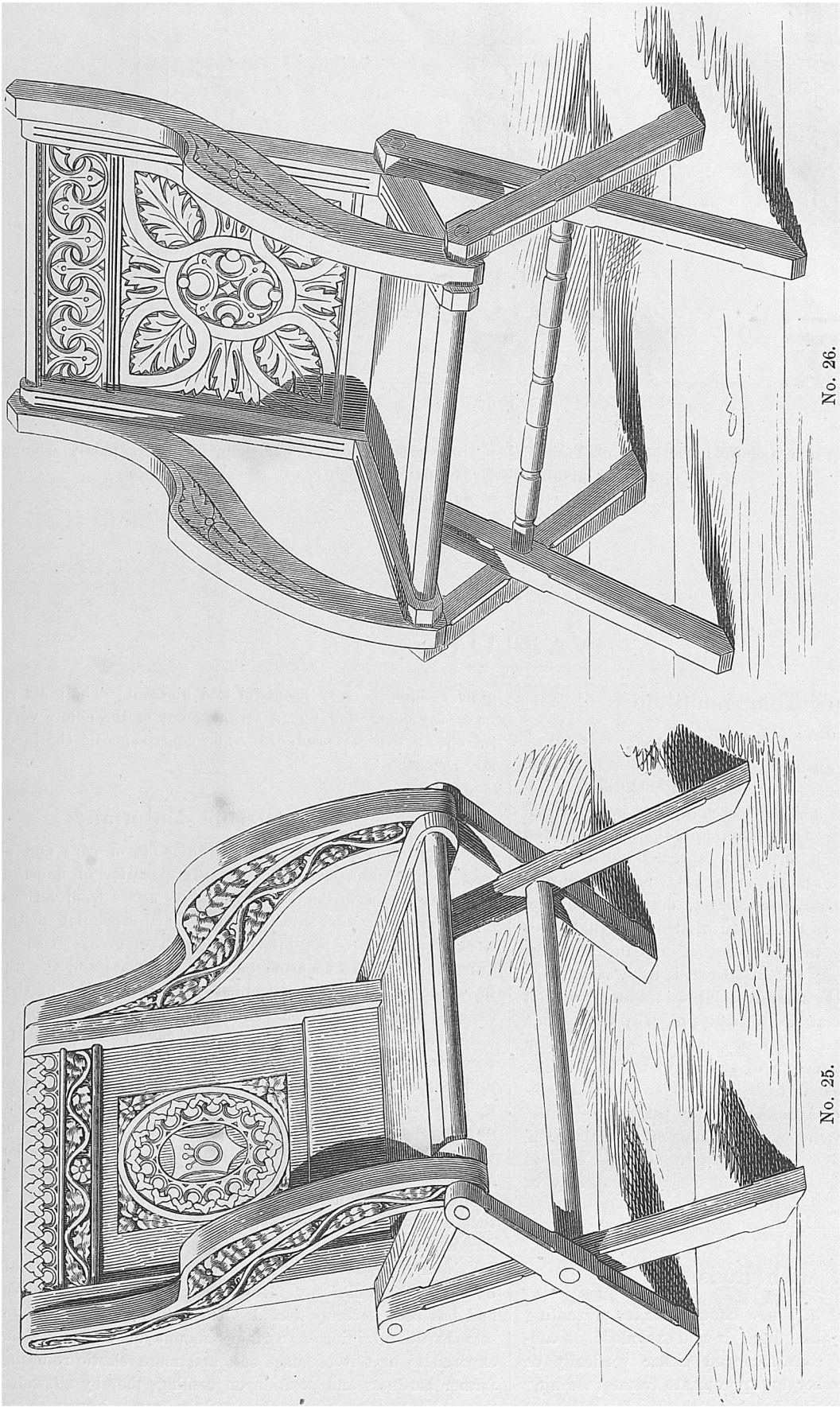


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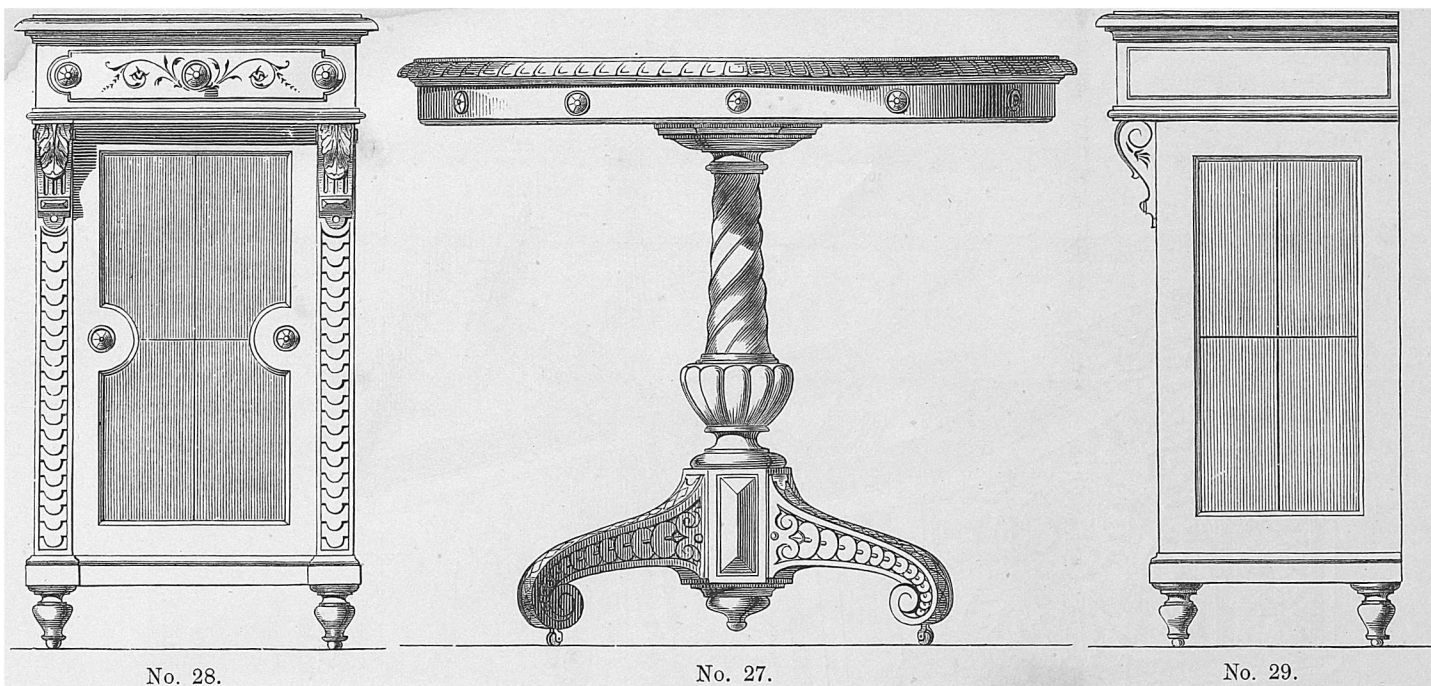
No. 24.

No. 22. Wrought Balcony. Mr. Ed. Puls;
Ornamental Metal-Worker, Berlin.

Nos. 23 and 24. Carved Oak Side-Board in Jacobian Stile, circa 1620. S. K. Museum.



Nos. 25 and 26. Ancient Oak Chairs, circa 1600.
No. 25 from the Abbey of Glastonbury, England; No. 26 from Melford Church Suffolk.



Nos. 27—29. Round Table, Front and Side Elevation of Night-Table, belonging to set of Bed-room Furniture partly communicated in preceding numbers. Mr. Steffan, Munich.
Details Nos 4—7 of Supplement.

VARIOUS.

Preparation of Tungsten Blue.

By M. Tessié de Motay.

Dissolve, in a sufficient quantity of water, and successively, 10 parts of tungstate of soda, 8 of tin-salt (protochloride of tin), 5 of ferrocyanide of potassium, and 1 of perchloride of iron. When all these substances are dissolved, the mixture is thoroughly stirred up, and the sediment which is formed is separated by filtration. As soon as the liquid has run off, the moist pasty matter is spread out in thin layers upon suitable glass plates, or shallow dishes, and for several days exposed to the action of strong daylight and sunshine. This slowly causes the formation of a beautifully blue pigment; and this action may be accelerated by washing the material, so as to remove the matters soluble in water which it yet contains. The blue material has a great similarity to Prussian blue, but differs from it by not being bleached by sunlight; akin to Prussian blue it resists the action of acids, but not of alkalis. The tungsten blue can be heated to about 180° without decomposition. Its per centage of composition, in 100 parts, is — water, 7.85; tin, 31.69; iron, 5.13; cyanogen, 19.41; blue oxide of tungsten, 35.60; total, 99.68. This blue is not affected by artificial light at all, and is sold at the same price as the very best quality of Prussian blue.

Glazing with Rods.

A New York paper speaks of a new contrivance for preventing people looking into a room, while light is not excluded. It consists of a numbers of glass rods arranged either vertically or horizontally, and secured together by appropriate frames, forming a series of cylindrical lenses which break up the light, and throw it into every part of the room, thus producing a soft and diffused

glow, which is very beautiful and pleasant. The glass rods may be of any color, and by an arrangement of the colors very beautiful effects can be produced. The contrivance is the invention of Mr. Demuth.

New Glazing Material.

In out-door glazing, whatever amount of care and attention may be exercised, it is occasionally a matter of much difficulty to ensure sound work. This uncertainty arises from various causes; for instance, the non-adherence of the paint-priming to the framework by reason of an interposing film of grease, size, etc.; the different rates of expansion between the glass and the framework in which it has been imbedded; and the action of the sun of exposed portions while a contiguous portion is shaded. In the latter case, large sheets of glass that have been imbedded in deep recesses, or sashes, or stonework, are often broken; but the greatest difficulty in keeping work sound while the glass remains unbroken is found in contiguous and extended metal sash-work, such as that on the roofs of Paxton construction, railway sheds, and conservatories. A more elastic medium than ordinary putty has long been a desideratum and we learn from a paper recently read before the Civil and Mechanical Engineers' Society, by W. R. M. Bancroft that a new compound of this kind is being manufactured by Sir W. A. Rose & Co. of London, under the name of *Thermo-Plastic Putty*. It has been used on the new large roof of the Great Northern Railway, King's-cross and other extensive works, and has been severely tested. This putty, we are told, speedily sets hard, retaining a certain amount of elasticity; but when exposed to heat it becomes soft and more elastic returning to its former hardness and position on cooling, thereby allowing for the unequal expansion of the glass and its frame, insuring sound work for a long period. The cost is not great. *The Builder.*